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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002381

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ENERGY FOR CAROLYN GAY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRIM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH EFCC

CHAIR RIBADU

Classified By: CDA Lisa Piascik for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. In his meeting with Deputy Secretary Negroponte and AF A/S Frazer, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman Malam Nuhu Ribadu expressed appreciation for USG backing for the EFCC and asked for continued public and material support. Ribadu expressed single-minded determination to continue to extend the EFCC's reach downward to the state and local levels, linking good governance and transparency at these levels directly to progress on democracy and fair elections. Ribadu thanked the Deputy Secretary for his visit to the organization -- the highest in the history of the EFCC -- and said it sends a clear message of U.S. support for Nigeria's reforms. The Deputy Secretary praised the EFCC for its hard work and reiterated the U.S. commitment to working with Nigeria to fight corruption and build democracy. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In a November 12 meeting between Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, AF A/S Frazer and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman Malam Nuhu Ribadu, both sides expressed their commitment to ongoing cooperation in fighting corruption and supporting Nigeria's democratic development. Chairman Ribadu thanked the Deputy Secretary for the U.S. support received to date and noted that the EFCC considers the U.S. to be a mentor and an example in the fight against corruption. Corruption, Ribadu noted, is the root cause of poverty and insecurity in Africa with poor leadership and mismanagement at the heart of Africa's (and Nigeria's) current problems.

EFCC - A VEHICLE FOR CHANGE

¶3. (C) Ribadu praised the role the EFCC has played over the past 4-5 years in fighting corruption and, as he saw it, reforming Nigerian politics. He told the Deputy Secretary that even Yar'Adua is a product of Nigeria's reforms, calling him "a break in the cycle" of corruption. Ribadu described Yar'Adua as a humble man, not an "African big man." This same culture of humble servant and accountability has also emerged, according to Ribadu, in the new National Assembly and state governors. Ribadu characterized the current set of governors as "far, far better than the last administration." Despite these improvements, however, the EFCC continues to follow "every cent" of GON spending and Ribadu noted the EFCC had previously detected money being taken out of the National

Assembly budget and had taken action. The current levels of fiscal responsibility, budget transparency, and national savings (both in reserves and the stabilization fund) are only possible, he maintained, because of the EFCC's work. Ribadu told the Deputy Secretary that in 2005 more than 10 billion USD was taken out of the country; however, after the arrest in the UK of two former governors more than 10 billion USD of capital returned to Nigeria in 2006. He attributed the boom in the capital market, communication and banking sectors to this increased capital inflow.

¶4. (C) Ribadu was hopeful that the reach of the EFCC and its influence on good governance would continue to move farther down in governmental structures toward the local levels. In response to the Deputy Secretary's query about state and local level activities, Ribadu noted that investigations are ongoing in several states, some already resulting in prosecutions, and that more than 100 local government areas (out of 774) have been investigated. According to Ribadu, the recent passage of the Fiscal Accountability Law will help to bring positive change to state and local government by increasing accountability and transparency. He admitted much more needs to be done at the local level, but said at present the EFCC is focused on "big corruption." Ribadu recognizes, however, that fighting corruption at all levels is the only way to bring about good governance and pave the way for free and fair elections. He characterized corruption in Nigeria as "endemic" and said strong enforcement of the rule of law is the only way to address it at all levels.

CURRENT EFCC ACTIVITIES

¶5. (C) Ribadu noted three specific EFCC activities as

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vehicles for change in Nigeria: the National Financial Intelligence Center (NFIU), the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and the Fix Nigeria program. Ribadu praised the NFIU, expressing appreciation for the support of the U.S. Department of Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN). The NFIU, he said, has for the first time compiled a strong data system for profiling criminal activities in the financial sector. The ability to understand and monitor the financial sector on an individual transaction basis has been a lynchpin in the fight against various types of criminal activities. Ribadu characterized the NEITI as a first for Nigeria, noting the intrinsic value of tracking the performance of actors in the oil industry. Ribadu commended the Deputy Secretary on the performance of U.S. companies in the oil industry, stating they are among the best in Nigeria at bringing best practices and transparency into the market place. Ribadu praised the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the transparent behavior it encourages in U.S. companies. Lastly, in response to the Deputy Secretary's question about involvement of civil society, Ribadu explained that the EFCC's Fix Nigeria initiative, a joint initiative with the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) and civil society, designs school curriculums and materials, supports public education and enlists the assistance of religious leaders in the fight against corruption, aiming to change the cultural perception of corruption.

ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. -- WHAT EFCC REALLY NEEDS

¶6. (C) The Deputy Secretary praised the EFCC for its hard work and determination to provide a better future for Nigeria. He reiterated the U.S. commitment to support Nigeria in its fight against corruption and toward good governance and democracy. Ribadu thanked the Deputy Secretary for the U.S. support received to date. In particular, he noted the more than 30 training sessions provided by the Departments of Treasury and Justice. Ribadu emphasized that the U.S. has a critical role to play in fighting corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, he said the U.S. must insist that reforms continue and he asked for basic

assistance in the form of equipment and technology. Ribadu thanked the Deputy Secretary for his visit and noted that his was the highest level visit ever to the EFCC offices and sends a clear message of U.S. support for reform. Ribadu said the EFCC needs basic equipment and technology to "help us survive," including: armored cars, body armor, communications gear, and technology for real-time recording of financial transactions. He noted the recent establishment of a National Forensics Laboratory (with U.S. support) and current efforts to establish a National Crime Data Center (with EU support). The Deputy Secretary told Ribadu he would encourage the USG to give the EFCC every support possible, noting again the positive work the Commission is doing. He indicated we would explore the possibility of further visits from Treasury and other agencies in the future.

¶7. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.

The Deputy Secretary

A/S Jendayi Frazer

CDA Lisa Piascik

Ted Wittenstein, D Staff

Embassy Notetaker

Nigeria

EFCC Chairman Malam Nuhu Ribadu

EFCC Secretary to the Commission Emmanuel Akomaye

EFCC Chief of External Relations Ibrahim Mohammed

EFCC Chief of Staff Dapo Olorunyomi

¶8. (U) The Deputy Secretary's staff has cleared this message.

PIASCIK